



FINAL

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security “PA Safe” Flagship Project to lay the groundwork for developing a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries

Visit to Poland Tuesday 19th November 2013

Baltic fleet data from Polish authorities

| Year | Length of vessels - 0-8 | Length of vessels - 8-12 | Length of vessels - 12-15 | Length of vessels - 15 and up | Total Number of vessels |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2013 | 234 | 276 | 54 | 140 | 704 |

Number of active fishermen not supplied.

Focus on one specific Baltic port of Poland: Kolobrzeg

BSRAC member Ryszard Malik, from the Producers’ Organisation Kołobrzeg Group of Producers Fish, facilitated the visit to the port and its facilities. He has been based at the port for many years and has a good overview and network.

Kolobrzeg still has an active fishing harbour, including the sale of locally caught fish. Due to the good weather, there were not many vessels in the harbour. Most of the vessels in the fleet are up to 15m and the maximum vessel size is 30m.

He pointed out a new ice making, freezer and cold storage facility that has only recently been built and opened at a cost of 90 million ZLT. The local Producers’ Organisation has paid towards that, and this confirms a positive view of investment in the future of this port.

Kolobrzeg also has its own shipyard which is carrying out vessel renewal as well as building some new boats. This shipyard can carry out repairs of vessels from Kolobrzeg as well as from other places, including from abroad. There is a lift for boats of up to 30 metres and up to 250 tonnes. Work is mostly carried out on vessels of 15-16 metres, and then on 30 metre vessels.

We were shown examples of repairs and upgrading/re-fitting of fishing vessels. This was highlighted as a positive sign for the fleet.

A large pelagic trawler was being re-built to fit a new engine, as well as refurbishing of the main deck. This was a vessel for a crew of five. It was also pointed out that those vessels that were refurbished to include a shelter deck gave increased safety and working conditions for the crew. Vessels are starting to fit RSW tanks on board vessels for the pelagic fishery, together with pumps for pumping from the vessel ashore.

One pelagic vessel was being re-built to include pelagic water tanks. Another was renovating the pump chilled water tank. Yet another vessel was being extended to 25 metres and when re-fitted, it was pointed out, it will be safe and well equipped: to well over the required standard.

There was another example of a new smaller vessel under construction, as well as of other vessels being refurbished and repaired.

Two more vessels are being extended in Szczecin. The activity of modernising and refitting vessels with better and more equipment was highlighted. This would lead to less labour intensive vessels, which was good for health and safety.

It was added that this will also lead to a smaller and more efficient fleet. Kolobrzeg fishing harbour will eventually have quite a modern fleet with just a few vessels.

Ryszard Malik highlighted that safety for the fishermen depends on several factors. Stability of the vessel is one important factor. Then there are modern techniques such as engines, hydraulics and so on, as well as personal safety, for example wearing gloves and the appropriate clothing. The breadth of knowledge by the fishermen is quite large and has to be known at different levels. Education and training must follow the changes that are coming about and then help to prepare the students for the changes.

Nowadays, accidents happen very fast. Only fire and leakage give the crew time to react. In the past, the vessels were owned by government companies and the employees were better protected than now. He felt it was not a major cost for shipowners to spend 500 ZL per crew member to give them the training they need.

The last major accidents at sea were connected to overloading the vessels in bad sea conditions. There was no point in apportioning blame. Safety comes with education and culture on board, as well as the need to educate the crew as the vessels become more modern. He gave an example of a crew hoisting up the net using powerful hydraulics: the vessel capsized and the crew fell overboard. The crew could not help each other because of lack of personal safety training.

Accidents on sea-going vessels sailing under the Polish flag are reported to the Maritime Chambers for investigation. Reports from every accident that happens are published. All accidents have been registered so far by the Polish Maritime Chambers and are made available to the public. These can be used in order to analyse and prevent future accidents. He underlined that there are not many accidents in the official statistics, but Ryszard Malik speculated about how many accidents do not get reported.

There was no arranged visit to a vessel in Kolobrzeg, but an impromptu visit to a trawler (cod and flounder) and meeting with the crew, who were willing to talk to us and be photographed. There were four men onboard, including the skipper – all young crew. They are very aware of the dangers of fishing. By way of example they mentioned a near-miss with a larger vessel only the day before: the larger vessel had not seen their fishing boat, although they had AIS. They could not avoid the danger because their fishing gear was in the water. They are also aware of the health and safety and the wear and tear of working on a fishing vessel. One crew member mentioned the compulsory refresher training for fishermen every five years and said it was expensive as they had to pay for it. But he was not negative about the fact that they had to do it.

It was also very hard job to deal with the catch, with no machines to help and their wish was for a better layout of the vessel to make things physically easier. This all costs money. They pointed out that the vessel was inspected every year.

The Maritime University of Szczecin, Baltic Fisheries Training Centre, Kołobrzeg

The training centre has been built in a former military academy which has recently been converted and renovated. The Director explained that one of the main purposes of this training centre is to provide training for fishermen from along the Polish coast. It is trying to fill the gap in the provision of education for fishermen between secondary school and high school levels.

It is part of the Maritime University of Szczecin, which has about 4,000 students, also offering courses to students from abroad. The centre is currently waiting for accreditation in order to come further and start teaching, so students will not have to go all the way to Szczecin.

The centre is a maritime school, teaching the skills of navigation and engineering. The training provided follows the STCW-F requirements. The centre has excellent, new facilities for navigation, radio communications, language learning, netmaking, engine room simulation: all state of the art technology. There are also brand new facilities at Kolobrzeg harbour for fire-fighting, life-saving, personal use of equipment and first aid. So the centre has made provision to teach the necessary safety skills. It will be a pure fisheries education centre and will also provide refresher courses.

The centre is also trying to be flexible and to offer short courses, for example in the use of radar equipment. It was agreed that fishermen are very special and it is difficult to get them to come to courses. The director made a strong call for attendance at this training centre to be compulsory. One particular request was for there to be more teaching on health and safety.

Stability was named as an important subject and it was discussed at length. The syllabus provides for it to be taught at a very theoretical level for first and second class skipper. But the wish was to bring it down to a more basic level for all to have a real understanding. This was particularly important because smaller vessels are being re-built for different application – e.g. to include cold water tanks – and this led to a greater risk of instability. The vessels are getting wider and deeper, but not longer, and for this reason, there was agreement that training in stability must follow the local conditions and the state of the vessels. So there was lots of theory, and a strong need to make it more practically oriented. Suggestions were made for an exchange with Denmark (through the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Service) on experience and education and sharing of material. The centre made a clear call for teaching material on stability which can be used at more basic level. The training centre is also seeking to learn from other Baltic States in terms of education and to make contact with other schools and training centres.

Ryszard Malik thought that if the centre is to succeed in attracting students to the courses, they have to market and promote the education more. The fishermen are happy to undertake re-training, but may find this training centre in Kolobrzeg too academic and theoretical. In his opinion, the idea of re-training is to have someone who will go out on the fishing vessel and advise them in a practical and hands on way. There was a need to focus on the importance of education and training, but it needs to be pitched at the right level and with the right amount of practical and theoretical content.

Nevertheless, the health and well-being of the fishermen can really benefit from the general development going on in this area of Poland. Growing tourism, the development and improvement of roads, the creation of this maritime centre of the maritime academy, as well

as a new harbour for pleasure boats, were all contributing to bringing some greater quality to the city and the region.

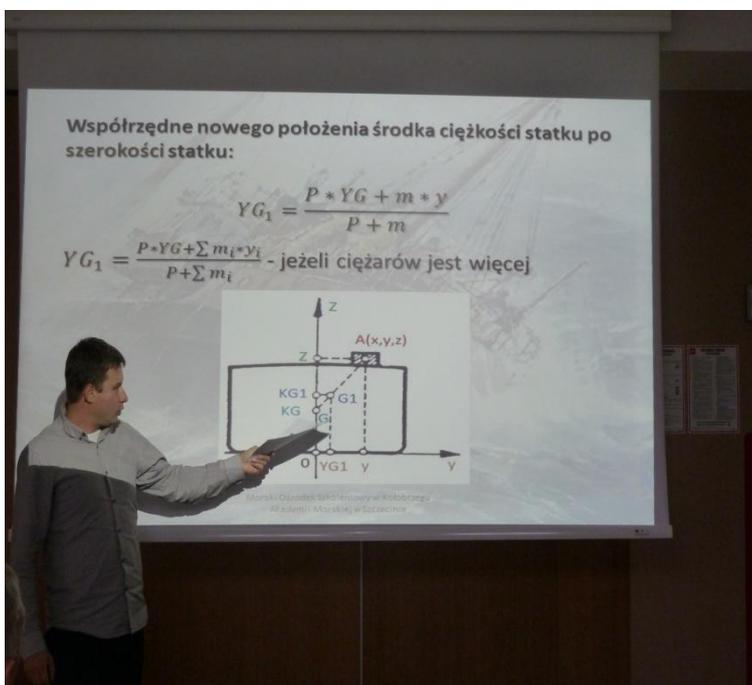
BSRAC member Krzysztof Stanuch from the National Chamber of Fish Producers has been involved in providing teaching materials for the netmaking courses. He highlighted that the general problem is to attract young people to the profession. Some shipowners claim to have problems in recruiting good, experienced crew, and some are willing to pay for their training. He highlighted that the problem is pronounced for the skippers class one and two: compared to the past, their skills are not so good. He saw it as a very positive development to have this training centre which has excellent modern facilities. In his view, the money has been invested well. But he is against the obligation to force fishermen to come here and train. The centre should be able to make use of its good name and location. The focus should be paid on the practical side of being a fisherman. The centre could also offer safety training to students from outside Poland.

Steve Karnicki, BSRAC honorary chair and chief scientist from the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Gdynia made a recent visit to the training centre. He highlighted that this is a most impressive training centre, fully equipped. He underlined the importance of a practical start to such a profession, and this means combining theory with practical experience. He was not able to get an answer to a question he had asked during his visit on the provision of simple courses for deck hands.

In conclusion: Poland has the schools. They have the people who can provide the education and training. The necessary infrastructure is in place. The challenge is to find and attract the fishermen.



Simulator training classroom at the Baltic Fisheries Training Centre



Tuition in vessel stability at the Baltic Fisheries Training Centre

Who we met:

Director Dariusz Kowalski Baltic Fisheries Training Centre, Kolobrzeg

Teachers: Artur Nahajowski and Maciej Wicik

Marlena Niewiarowska, Secretariat at the Baltic Fisheries Training Centre, Kolobrzeg

Ryszard Malik, Kolobrzeg Group of Producers Fish

Krzysztof Stanuch, National Chamber of Fish Producers

Steve Karnicki, BSRAC honorary chair and chief scientist from the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Gdynia and Chief Advisor on the Common Fisheries Policy of EU

Documents and further information

From Steve Karnicki: we have received:

- Information on the training courses on offer at the Baltic Fisheries Training Centre
- A folder in English which presents the facilities and gives good photos of each.

Information on other training centres

In addition to the training centre we visited, Ryszard Malik highlighted that there are several private schools and training centres in Poland which are authorised to offer all sorts of courses and training for those working in the maritime sector. Lots of courses are offered in accordance with the STCW Convention-78/95, based on model courses from the IMO. There is a maritime portal that gives access to all sorts of information, from jobs on offer in the maritime sector, to general news, news on vessels, ports and people, and the offshore sector:

<http://www.portalmorski.pl/index.php>

Further in the site there is a section on education and training. And here Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin, Świnoujście and Kolobrzeg can be selected to find the training centres and the relevant courses.

<https://www.portalmorski.pl/crewing/index.php?id=szkolenia>

The Baltic Fisheries Training Centre in Kolobrzeg is included in the profile.

Some of the schools/centres give the prices of the courses that they offer.